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Summary record of the 9th meeting
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Chairman: Mr. MacKay ..... (New Zealand)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Kuznetsov

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04-55309 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 108: Programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (*continued*)

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (*continued*) (A/C.5/59/L.3)

Draft resolution A/C.5/59/L.3

1. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that an earlier version of paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, which had been discussed in the informal consultations, might have led to delays and restricted the Secretariat in its efforts to comply with the request contained in the paragraph. The Secretariat always tried to follow as closely as possible the format of peacekeeping operations. Given the necessary flexibility, the application of the new version of paragraph 3 should not cause the Secretariat any difficulties.

2. *Draft resolution A/C.5/59/L.3 was adopted.*

Agenda item 119: Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 48/218 B and 54/244 (*continued*)

3. **Mr. Al-Ansari** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) made a big contribution to the effective implementation of the Organization's programmes and legislative mandates. It had secured major savings in the resources allocated and deserved commendation for its efforts to further improve its work, in line with the recommendations of the General Assembly.

4. Oversight was both an external and an internal service, whose effectiveness depended on cooperation between internal and external bodies. Cooperation between OIOS, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and the Board of Auditors should therefore be improved with a view to avoiding duplication and developing complementarity in their work. The Group of 77 and China would welcome information from the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services about the steps that had been taken to establish such cooperation and how effective they had been.

5. The approval of changes in and continuation of legislative mandates was the exclusive prerogative of intergovernmental bodies and OIOS should not make any proposals to the General Assembly in that regard. Where operational independence was concerned, the movement and promotion of the personnel of internal oversight bodies must comply with the Charter, the relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly, the Staff Regulations, and the rules of the organizations of the system. The Under-Secretary-General might explain to the Committee the degree to which those provisions had been applied and the position with regard to equitable geographical representation in OIOS.

6. The Group of 77 and China cautioned against creating an inflated bureaucracy. Indeed, OIOS should present an example of leanness and efficiency. They stressed the importance of paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 54/244 and the need for its full implementation and drew attention to the request to the Secretary-General contained in paragraph 5 of the resolution, which had not been complied with to the extent envisaged in the resolution.

7. **Mr. Kramer** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, said that effective and independent oversight was fundamental to the sound governance of the United Nations. The work of OIOS underpinned the efforts to secure the accountability, diligence and integrity which inspired confidence in and respect for institutions. OIOS had served the Organization well, but the key to real impact lay in the implementation of recommendations, where there was room for improvement. The independence of OIOS was vital and proposals for its further strengthening would be welcome. The ongoing nature of internal oversight should be recognized so that there would be no need for automatic review of the OIOS mandate in the future.

8. **Mr. Elji** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation attached great importance to the work of OIOS, having actively participated in the drafting of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B, by which the Office had been established, and in the review of the work of OIOS undertaken at the Assembly's fifty-fourth session. Its interest in the item stemmed from its desire to optimize the Organization's internal and external oversight functions and to enhance the monitoring and evaluation of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations. Concern

had been expressed about the Office's tendency to exceed its mandate and authority and to interfere in core functions of the legislative bodies. In its resolution 54/244, the Assembly had therefore sought to clarify the role of OIOS and to render its work more transparent. His delegation was grateful to the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services for his efforts to ensure that OIOS adhered strictly to its mandate. The Office now provided valuable services in the areas of audit, investigation and evaluation and made an important contribution to efforts to address abuses of authority, duplication of work and waste. However, there remained room for improvement, despite the progress made.

9. The General Assembly must be more proactive in its consideration of OIOS reports. In many cases, rather than take action on those reports, the Assembly merely took note of them. In other cases, it was unable even to agree on a course of action because of conflicting opinions among delegations about the effectiveness of the reports and the extent to which they related to the Office's mandate. Without guidance from the Assembly, OIOS had been unable to improve its working methods or gauge the value of its recommendations. The Office's reports must be submitted directly to the Assembly. Currently, they were first transmitted to the Secretariat, which was able to accept or reject the recommendations of OIOS before the Assembly had an opportunity to consider them.

10. His delegation wished to see greater emphasis on the investigation and monitoring functions of OIOS. Currently, there was an excessive focus on audit, creating the potential for overlapping with the work of the Board of Auditors. Also, the lack of a general policy for the conduct of the Office's work had led it to develop its own special procedures, which still needed to be evaluated by the General Assembly. A number of administrative departments, including the Office of Human Resources Management, were subject to OIOS oversight, while at the same time being responsible for allocating resources to the Office and recruiting its staff. Although his delegation had confidence in the departments concerned, there remained a risk of conflicts of interest. The issue of the geographical distribution of OIOS staff also required attention. Lastly, OIOS must familiarize itself with the concerns of Member States, as expressed in the resolutions they adopted and in the course of their deliberations in the General Assembly, including weaknesses in the administration of justice, lack of accountability in the Secretariat and late issuance of documentation. He was convinced that, if the Office made the necessary changes, it could contribute more fully to ensuring the efficient and effective implementation of the Organization's legislative and programmatic mandates.

Agenda item 136: Financing of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (A/59/286 and A/59/417)

11. **Ms. Pollard** (Director of the Peacekeeping Financing Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the revised budget for the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 (A/59/286), said that the revised budget of $291,603,600 represented an increase of about 48 per cent on the amount that had already been appropriated by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/308 of 18 June 2004. The increase was due to the more gradual reduction of military and civilian personnel. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly were set out in paragraph 25 of the report.

12. **Mr. Saha** (Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the proposed revised budget (A/59/417), said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the total amount requested. The revised estimates corresponded to the revised drawdown plan that had been approved by the Security Council, which envisaged a more gradual reduction in the military and police strength of UNAMSIL.

13. Information on performance in the current period was provided in Part II of the report, where the Advisory Committee commended the Mission on its well-managed cash position and called upon Headquarters to replicate its good practices in other missions. Paragraphs 13 and 14 of the report contained information on activities related to liquidation, and paragraphs 16 to 20 on the drawdown of military, police and civilian personnel. In paragraph 19, the Advisory Committee called upon the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to assign greater priority to ensuring that adequate numbers of experienced staff were available to carry out winding up activities efficiently and effectively.

14. With regard to operational costs, the Advisory Committee was of the opinion that the training

programmes offered should be related to the operational needs of the downsized Mission, although training programmes for strengthening the capacity of national staff might be planned and executed at all stages of a mission, especially in the downsizing phase. Paragraphs 26 to 32 reviewed the cooperation between UNAMSIL and other peacekeeping operations and United Nations programmes and entities in the region, and emphasized that the exit strategy should be smooth and, to that end, should be coordinated by UNAMSIL. In paragraph 35, the Advisory Committee recommended that consideration should be given to extending the funding for quick-impact projects beyond the initial stages of missions.

15. **Ms. Udo** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that in earlier statements on the item the Group had drawn attention to the need for the drawdown strategy for UNAMSIL to be handled in such a way as to develop the necessary national capacities and had urged the Secretariat to ensure that the reduction of troop strength was accompanied by the achievement of a number of critical benchmarks. UNAMSIL had suffered the tragic loss of 24 personnel, including 14 members of the Pakistani contingent, and the Group extended its deepest sympathy to the families of the deceased.

16. The need to adjust the drawdown timetable had arisen because of developments on the ground, and the adjusted timetable was on track. In its resolution 1562 (2004), the Security Council had welcomed the adjustment. The Group hoped that the gradual drawdown plans would take full account of the security situation on the ground.

17. The African Group endorsed the Secretary-General's revised budget estimates and joined the Advisory Committee in commending the Mission for its cash-management performance. It noted the comments made in paragraph 13 of the Advisory Committee's report and welcomed the initiative taken by UNAMSIL to review its asset write-off and disposal process, which had led to the establishment of an Assets Disposal Group and an Asset Disposal and Environmental Protection Unit. That initiative had been incorporated into the standard guidelines that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations applied in all missions.

18. The reasons for the departure of a significant number of well-trained UNAMSIL personnel to other missions must be explored and measures taken to retain such personnel, who had an important role to play in the critical downsizing phase. The Secretary-General should take steps to guarantee such personnel posts in other missions at the end of the liquidation period.

19. As noted in paragraph 31 of the Advisory Committee's report, multidimensional partnerships were needed for recovery and sustainable development in Sierra Leone. The African Group would like to know what impact the second pillar had had in UNAMSIL and why it had disappeared from the current structure. It would also welcome an explanation of the rationale for the activities now placed under the aegis of the remaining Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and their implications for the exit strategy. Lastly, it would be useful to know which of the lessons learned could be replicated in other missions.

20. The commendable cooperation between UNAMSIL and other United Nations peacekeeping missions in the subregion must be maintained during the downsizing period, as UNAMSIL continued to be a flagship operation that did excellent work.

21. **Mr. Postema** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey), the stabilization and association process countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), and, in addition, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, said that the European Union's general policy on the financing of peacekeeping operations had been outlined in the statement made by his delegation at the Committee's 4th meeting, on Thursday, 7 October 2004, under agenda items 129 and 155. The European Union supported the Advisory Committee's comments on the revised budget for UNAMSIL. It noted with concern the erosion of experienced staff away from UNAMSIL to other missions in the region. It attached great importance to a well-planned, well-executed exit strategy, for which competent and experienced staff were required. It therefore wished to urge the Secretariat to ensure that adequate numbers of experienced staff were available to carry out winding up activities. Lastly, it would welcome any cooperation between UNAMSIL and the other two United Nations missions in West Africa.

22. **Mr. Mutiso** (Chief of the Finance Management and Support Service in the Department of

Peacekeeping Operations), responding to the questions raised by the representative of Nigeria, said that lessons had been learned with regard to the duties of the second Deputy Special Representative. Under the new structure for the remainder of the Mission, he was in charge of humanitarian assistance, coordination and development. The UNAMSIL example was being replicated in the missions in Burundi and Côte d'Ivoire, and the lessons learned were being compiled by the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, which was to issue a report on the subject. The second pillar was indeed still operational in UNAMSIL.

23. On the question of the departure of trained personnel, it was inevitable that UNAMSIL would be called upon to help the newer missions in the region. The UNAMSIL drawdown arrangements were designed to ensure that core staff remained and additional personnel would be recruited to fill any gaps.

24. **Ms. Udo** (Nigeria) said that she could not understand how departures could be beneficial if new personnel had to be recruited. Existing staff members should simply be retained in UNAMSIL. She would take the matter up again in the informal consultations.

25. **Mr. Abbas** (Pakistan), referring to the loss of 14 members of the Pakistani contingent in UNAMSIL, asked what steps the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was taking to improve the security of personnel and what were the findings of the investigation of the incident.

26. **The Chairman** said that the Department would provide further information in the informal consultations. He was sure that he was speaking on behalf of the entire Committee in expressing condolences to the delegation of Pakistan.

Agenda item 154: Financing of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (A/59/289 and A/59/419 and Corr.1)

27. **Ms. Pollard** (Director of the Peacekeeping Financing Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the budget for the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 (A/59/289), recalled that the Security Council, in its resolution 1528 (2004), had established the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) for an initial period of 12 months from 4 April 2004. The General Assembly, in its resolution 58/310, had appropriated $200.6 million for the maintenance of the mission for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2004. The budget for the mission amounted to $384.4 million. That would provide for the deployment of 200 military observers, 6,040 military contingent personnel, 350 civilian police, 387 international and 405 national staff, and 215 United Nations Volunteers. The budget included an amount of $12.8 million for the replenishment of items transferred to the mission from the strategic deployment stocks. The action to be taken by the General Assembly, namely, appropriation of $183.7 million in addition to the $200.6 million already appropriated under resolution 58/310, was outlined in paragraph 97 of the report.

28. **Mr. Saha** (Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/59/419 and Corr.1), said that the recommendations contained in the report would entail a reduction of $5.9 million in the proposed budget for UNOCI for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005. With regard to the mandate and planned results, the Advisory Committee pointed out that the concept of the integrated mission and the coordination role did not seem fully developed in the budget document, despite the fact that the Operation had had, in effect, six months of experience in implementing that structure.

29. The Advisory Committee commended the Operation for the substantial progress it had made in the emplacement of military contingent personnel and military observers. There had been delays, however, in the deployment of the aviation transport unit. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the estimate for military contingents should be reduced by $849,200. It also stressed the need for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to deal with the difficulties experienced in finding French-speaking candidates for civilian police.

30. The structure of the mission was discussed in paragraphs 23 to 28 of the report. A number of the Advisory Committee's previous recommendations concerning streamlining had been taken into account in the preparation of the revised budget for UNOCI. However, some of its concerns had not been fully addressed, in particular with regard to the need to establish clear lines of authority and to avoid fragmentation and grade inflation. In paragraph 28, it cautioned against the tendency to replicate functions of

the mission itself in the Offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Deputy Special Representatives. The Advisory Committee's recommendations on posts, in paragraphs 29 to 31, reflected its concerns with regard to the structure of the mission and were consistent with its recommendations on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB). With respect to operational costs, it called for the coordination of training in all three missions in the region and made a number of recommendations aimed at reducing expenditure for consultants and official travel.

31. In paragraph 40, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should appropriate an amount of $374.5 million gross for the maintenance of UNOCI for the period, in addition to the amount of $200.6 million already appropriated under Assembly resolution 58/310.

32. **Mr. Obame** (Gabon), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the Group supported the proposed budget for UNOCI. It welcomed the quality of the results-based frameworks used in the budget document and noted with satisfaction that the various components and expected accomplishments corresponded to the mandate of the Operation, as contained in Security Council resolution 1528 (2004). The cooperation between the three United Nations missions in West Africa was also most welcome, and the Group looked forward to the issuance of the report on inter-mission cooperation currently under preparation.

33. The successful implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme was a prerequisite for the restoration of peace in Côte d'Ivoire. The Group was therefore concerned that there remained funding difficulties for the reintegration phase. The World Bank, which was to have provided a loan to cover most of the costs of that phase, had suspended disbursements to Côte d'Ivoire owing to non-payment of its debt obligations, as required under the Bank's conditions for the payment of loans.

34. With regard to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, which would entail a reduction of $5.9 million in the budget for UNOCI, the Group noted, in particular, the recommendation that the post of Deputy Special Representative for Humanitarian Coordination, Recovery and Reconstruction should be approved at the D-2 level, rather than at the Assistant Secretary-General level as proposed in the budget document. It wished to emphasize that the functions assigned to the Deputy Special Representative were of vital importance for the implementation of the mission's mandate and that the level of responsibility of the post fully justified the Secretary-General's proposal. There was a need to establish a balance between the post and that of Deputy Special Representative for Operations and Rule of Law. The approval of both posts at the Assistant Secretary-General level would send a strong signal about the importance of development and humanitarian assistance in conflict resolution.

35. Côte d'Ivoire faced enormous challenges. There were approximately 500,000 displaced persons and 69,000 refugees, while the economy and much of the country's infrastructure had been severely affected by the conflict. The political situation, moreover, was extremely complex, although there had been progress in the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. The international community must show its solidarity with Côte d'Ivoire by contributing appropriately to the country's reconstruction.

36. **Mr. Postema** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey), the stabilization and association process countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), and, in addition, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, said that the European Union concurred with the Advisory Committee's comments on the budget for UNOCI. It wished to commend the Secretariat for using results-based frameworks in the budget document. In line with Security Council resolution 1528 (2004), it would welcome inter-mission cooperation in the region, particularly with respect to administrative and logistical support and training. A regional approach to training, using in-house expertise from the missions, could help reduce expenditure for consultants. The European Union wished to encourage the Secretariat to pursue its efforts to recruit national staff, notwithstanding the difficulties of finding qualified candidates. It fully supported the Advisory Committee's recommendations on posts and shared its concerns about the replication of functions of the mission itself in the Office of the Special Representative. In that connection, it wished to receive further justification from the Secretariat for the staffing proposals.

37. **Ms. Poku** (Ghana) said that her delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Gabon on behalf of the African Group. As a neighbour of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana recognized the immense contribution of UNOCI to the restoration of security in that country. The level of the budget proposed for the Operation reflected the complex and varied tasks it was carrying out. She noted with satisfaction the action taken to implement the Advisory Committee's previous recommendations, including the establishment of a timeline for the implementation of the DDR programme, which would commence once a political agreement had been reached between the Ivorian parties concerned. The cooperation among the three United Nations missions in West Africa was most welcome, since pooling of resources would maximize the effectiveness and minimize the overall cost of the missions. She expressed concern that the implementation of the Advisory Committee's recommendations for the abolition or downgrading of certain posts (A/59/419, para. 29) would diminish the Operation's efficiency and place an excessive burden on the incumbents of merged posts. UNOCI was operating in difficult circumstances and required adequate human resources for the discharge of its mandate.

Organization of work

38. **The Chairman** drew attention to the proposed programme of work for the remainder of the session, which would be considered by the Committee at its next meeting, on Monday, 18 October 2004. He noted that, in response to the Committee's request, the Secretariat had expedited the issuance of documentation. As stated in the note by the Secretariat on the status of preparedness of documentation (A/C.5/59/L.1/Rev.1), 18 documents had been issued before the estimated date of issuance, 8 had been issued on the date and 3 had been issued late. In 4 cases, the estimated date of issuance had been put back.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.